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CONTENT

ECONOMICS

<i>Voskanyan G.V.</i> FINANCING AGRICULTURE AND WAYS TO INVEST LOAN INSURANCE IN RA	3
---	---

JURISPRUDENCE

<i>Mingazov L.H.</i> SEVERAL METHODS OF RESEARCHING THE ACTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY OF INTERNATIONAL RULES	5
---	---

<i>Ryapolova E.I.</i> PROBLEMS OF THE APPLICATION OF TACTICAL ADMISSION IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS	13
---	----

<i>Mokoseeva M.</i> THE PROCESSES OF HARMONIZATION OF RUSSIAN LEGISLATION WITH INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	10
---	----

MEDICAL SCIENCES

<i>Slobodyan M.G., Syakina G.E., Cybulskaya E.A.</i> MONITORING OF STUDENTS' STANCE ON A QUESTION OF SMOKING PREVENTION EFFICIENCY AMONG THE YOUNG GENERATION	17
--	----

PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES

<i>Volkova N.V., Gudina G.V., Kareeva G.V., Syakina G.V.</i> FEATURES OF THE CREATIVE APPROACH IN ACTIVITIES TEACHERS OF PHYSICAL CULTURE	19
--	----

<i>Kamaev O.I., Proskurov E.M.</i> VIKORISTANNA NORUKHOMIKH REGULATION FOR YAKISNY ZASVOCNNYA FIZYCHNIKH TRUE	20
--	----

PHILOLOGY

<i>Lukianets H.H.</i> TRANSFER OF <i>GREEN/ЗЕЛЕНИЙ</i> COLOUR MEANING IN ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN FICTION	23
--	----

<i>Lukianets T.H.</i> SOCIAL GENDER ROLES ADAPTATION: NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN LITERARY FAIRY TALES	30
--	----

<i>Lukianets M.H.</i> MAIN STAGES OF CONFLICT COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PRAGMALINGUISTIC ASPECT	27
---	----

<i>Turdieva K.Sh.</i> ARTISTIC PECULARITIES OF "SHAYTANAT" ("KINGDOM OF DEMONS")	34
--	----

<i>Sharapova G.D.</i> FEATURES OF PARONYMS IN ENGLISH AND KOREAN LANGUAGES	37
--	----

PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICS

<i>Shirapov D.Sh., Itigilov G.B.</i> PROBLEMS OF MATHEMATICAL MODELING OF PROPAGATION OF ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES IN GYROTROPIC ELLIPTIC WAVEGUIDES	40
---	----

TECHNICAL SCIENCES

<i>Gorshkova L.V., Askarova N.N.</i> CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTIONS ENSURING EFFECTIVE SOUND INSULATION OF ENCLOSING STRUCTURES	44
--	----

<i>Ivanko A.F., Ivanko M.A., Ruban C.</i> INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR APPLICANTS	47
---	----

<i>Sergeeva I.Yu., Rainik V.S.</i> STUDY OF THE KINETIC STABILITY OF MODEL SYSTEMS BASED ON OAT FLOUR	53
---	----

<i>Shagiev N.R., Latypov B.M., Isupov I.A., Shabanov V.A.</i> STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SUPPLY NETWORK FOR DIRECT ON LINE START OF STD- 6300	56
---	----

<i>Kravchenko V.A., Shirapov D.Sh., Chimitov D.N.</i> SERIES-PARALLEL DECOMPOSITION OF DYNAMIC SYSTEMS ON LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL MODELLING	59
---	----

<i>Gulevsky V.A., Shtremmel S.A., Koryev D.N. Afanasyev V.A., Ogorodnikov S.S.</i> THE PREPARATION OF COMPOSITES BY IMPREGNATION IS CARBON-GRAPHITE- ALUMINUM ALLOY	65
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TRANSFER OF GREEN/ЗЕЛЕНИЙ COLOUR MEANING IN ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN FICTION

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Abstract

The article deals with transfer of English *green* and Ukrainian *зелений* colour terms meanings in literary texts. It is established that colour presentation scheme in the poetry and prose is designated by colour terms not only in their primary meaning, but also in secondary one, crated as the result of semantic transfer based on resemblance and contiguity, and represented by colour metaphors and metonyms respectively. Colour metaphors are often based on learned associations of above mentioned ethnic groups, which contribute much to the way writers perceive and attach meanings to colours. Colour metonymies used in fiction add deeper symbolic meaning in the understanding of the literary characters and situations.

Keywords: colour terms, colour metaphor, colour metonymy, transfer of meaning.

Colour, as the inherent property of objects, is presented in texts by means of using colour terms, which function not only for description and visualisation of setting, but also for rendering authors' connotative meanings, regarding information stated. So, colours are often used in fiction for characters' and environment description and can be implicit, i.e. understood conventionally from colours of objects, or explicit, i.e. shown with the help of colour terms. Among numerous linguistic researches, dedicated to analysis of colour terms categorisation and semantics in different languages [1; 5], there are just a few connected with cross-cultural analysis of their poetic use in different languages [8], though it is a well-accepted fact that semantics of colour terms is often extended by different authors in literary texts [2]. New figurative meanings are added to the traditional framework of colour and make the text emotional and full of visual imagery. Thus, modern linguists face the need of in-depth research of mechanisms connected with transfer of meaning, as they are crucial for understanding implied sense in fiction.

The research **aims** at description of basic mechanisms of English and Ukrainian lexemes meaning transfer, taking into account salience and concurrence of colour terms in fiction of the related languages.

In this work we distinguish between three terms *change*, *development*, and *transfer of meaning*. The *change of meaning* presupposes total replacement of old meaning by new one due to historical changes, and is not relevant to colour terms as their denotative meaning remains unchanged with time being. The *development of meaning* happens when new meaning appears and coexists with the old one in the semantic structure of the word, characterising different aspect of setting, events or characters, connected and associated with colour. For example, according to online Cambridge Dictionary *Eng. yellow* has primary meaning 'of a colour like that of a lemon or gold or the sun', and developed meaning 'belonging to a race that has pale yellowish-brown skin' [DC]. The *transfer of meaning* is subcategory of meaning development, which occurs with the appearance of additional colour meanings, when colour terms are used in the texts figuratively to refer to various categories, different from colour ones [4], i.e. to

create an atmosphere or a meaning inside a text in which a colour term acquire figurative significance [7, p. 98]. For instance, the third meaning of *Eng. yellow* (informal) 'easily frightened and not brave' [ibid] is an example of metonymical colour term meaning, as an analogy to yellow-bellied bird that is easily scared and coward [VOC].

The most productive mechanisms of transfer of meaning in poetry and prose, evident from Ukrainian and English corpora analysis, are metaphors (transfer base on resemblance), and metonymies (transfer based on contiguity).

Green / Зелений Colour metaphors in English and Ukrainian fiction. The role of colour terms in creating metaphors is significant. Colour metaphor is a word or expression that is used to talk about an entity or quality other than that referred to by its core or more basic meaning [2, p.54]. Verbal metaphors, including those of colours, are used in literary texts for conceptualizing and making expressible relevant parts of people's inner life and everyday cognitive activity. Authors either create new conceptual entities that extend pre-existing categories, or use the expressive properties of objects and events as a perceptual basis. Compare two examples of Ukrainian poetry:

(1) *Пробігла жовта квітка поміж нами — / й велика ніч з зеленими очима / між нас хотіла стиха просочитись* (І.Малкович *Мені подаровано чарівний букет жовтих троянд*);

(2) *не раз на цій дивній зорі / я толочив сітник, але він не образивсь — / серед ночі сьогодні пронизливо зашелестів. / Ія з того зеленого шелесту сплів, як бувало, / бричку, ліхтар, перукарську машинку,* (І.Малкович *Сітник, або Ситняг*).

In the first citation, imparting night with human qualities (*green eyes*), the poet creates his individual metaphoric image of night, and thus extends readers traditional knowledge of this phenomenon. While in the second extract metaphoric meaning of *green* is based on author's subjective image of trees in the park, based on their expressive perceptive properties of being green and producing noise.

Colour is often used in literary texts as interaction of metaphor and metonymy expressions for linguistic

action, and is called *metaphonymy*, the term suggested by Goossens [3, p. 323–342]. The figurative or rather semiotic usage of green colour in the sentence such as *'She kept her lashes lowered to hide the raging green fire of her eyes'* in Sarah Holland's *Ungoverned Passion* may be treated as metaphor. In metaphor one feature of the term refers to the whole of another term as in the case of metonymy or simile, so the colour term (*green fire*) and the figurative meaning (*rage, envy*) share one feature or component (*force and intensity*). Still it is rather difficult to transfer features of colour lexemes which are quite abstract. What authors actually transfer to the new meanings of colour is not really a hue, but connotations, associations, implications they connect with a certain hue. In fact they transfer what a colour or its name suggests to the reader. Thus in the phrase like *the raging green fire of her eyes* associations with *green* in context known to the reader and writer are transferred.

Genuine colour metaphors presented in literary texts are often based on learned *associations* of certain ethnic group, which contribute much to the way people perceive and attach meanings to colours. Today, psychological associations of colours, and thus the connotations of colour vocabulary, are exploited not only in fiction, but also in a wide range of contexts, such as in the description of paint shades, advertising language, and techniques of self-imaging. Almost all psychological colour associations are expressed metaphorically. For instance, metaphorical meaning of *green* as life and rebirth in the following extract is based on the stereotypical positive psychological association of spring with something newly-appeared and bright:

The May blossom was out, however, and there was green everywhere, in lawns and trees, and in shrubs and bushes, together with purple pansies and statues, while in the background birds sang (J. Steele *West of Bohemia*).

In the literary context the change of direct colour meaning into metaphorical takes place because of certain emotions caused by a specific moment or event. In fiction, the relation between the event and physiological effect is expressed in metaphors and presents culture-specific ideas about the world and its functioning. Certain emotions are related to definite colour metaphors. Shame, anger or rage for instance, is associated with red both in English and Ukrainian, while *blue* usually denotes calmness and silence. Green in English is used to express envy:

Other women took one look at them, and went green with envy (P. Falconer *War in high heels*).

It's what you were born for --; to make men's heads turn and women's eyes grow green with envy for all that you have that they can never hope to achieve (R. Elliot *Lover's charade*).

In Ukrainian, though, the spectre of emotions denoted by green is much wider: envy (*Вони аж зеленіють від заздрості, диллячись на вашу землю* (В. Стелмаха *Рідня*); surprise, suddenness (*Хлопчина позеленів від несподіваної пригоди, опутив ніж на темну оранину й розлучливо залепетав* (В. Даниленко *Увечері після карнавалу*); rage (*Андрій своїм тоном, своїм презирством, своєю тонкою іронією змішав*

цю рудоогриву з піском. Вона геть позеленіла, вона вже не лаялась, а лише клекотіла всередині й пашила на Андрія полум'ям, як вогненноогривий дракон (І. Багряний *Сад гетсиманський*); indifference (*Великий князь їхав попереду на своєму яблукатому жеребці, зовсім не схожий на того Гатила, який ще півроку тому загивав, доброхит' віддавши себе на поталу повільній смерті від зеленої липучої байдужості* (І. Білик *Меч Арєя*); sorrow, grief (*Архип Білоконь, що пильно стежив за походом з вікна своєї хати, аж позеленів з туги* (О. Довженко *Земля*).

Colour is often the major component of metaphorical image in poetry and prose. Both Ukrainian and English writers create metaphors for conceptualizing abstract concepts in terms of the apprehendable, presenting their individual understanding of the world. Metaphors thus are used to express unique ideas that are inexpressible by literary language. Consequently, colour metaphors are different in various languages and in various texts. Compare two examples of English and Ukrainian fiction, where metaphor of *being green/зелений* is used to express characters' being young and inexperienced differently:

(1) *Верніться! Такі зелені й наївні, такі жовтороті* (І. Багряний *Огненне коло*);

(2) *He told us not to lean out of the windows, not to point, and explained the word 'greenhorn': an inexperienced person, esp. one who is extremely gullible* (S. Richardson *The Promised Land*).

In the first citation, lack of experience is shown by green and yellow colours, while in the second one, green colour metaphor of human qualities originates from horse description.

Each colour in poetry has its emotional expressiveness. Almost all epithets based on colour semantics when used in poetry acquire metaphorical meaning:

Ти поспішаєш. Знаю. Бо відчув / У тиші, у флюїдах кольорових / Незграбність березневого дощу / І теплу ніжність котиків вербових, / Що вибігли з лози, мов із осель, / У світ весни і пристрастей зелених... (С. Пант'юк *Екстатичне накликання стихії*).

Still sometimes green colour can be used in its direct, non-figurative meaning to express physical qualities of objects. Correlation of direct and metaphorical meanings of colour is evident from the exact context:

(1) *The sea, now: soft aquamarine blue-green To brown waves; and the tide is going out, out And the air is warm* (G. and R. Godbert *For now*).

(2) *The sea was a dull murky green, and angry. Waves broke on the shore and eventually expired in a froth and myriad of bubbles* (E. Blair *Maggie Jordan*).

While the first citation is the description of weather conditions at the sea shore, the second one shows author's individual perception of the sea, and emotions caused by the scene.

Metaphors in fiction cross over such categorical dividers as animate/inanimate, cosmic/biological, human/animal by recourse to associative and sensory logic. Colour metaphors in this case are either rooted in cultural models of everyday experience or are based on abstract-amodal representations of writers' perceptual

experience. They cause the polysemy of colour terms and frequent usage in different contexts, when colour words are used by writers to express something other than a perceptual dimension. When English and Ukrainian writers use *green/зелений* meaning 'freedom', it is not only linguistic fact, but also the issue that cultural community sees greenness as metaphorically standing for freedom and possibility to choose, as, for example, in the following extract:

For this reason he was given the green light to prepare more detailed proposals for further consideration (M. L. Kilby *Man at the sharp end*).

Still metaphors are not only stylistic devices used by authors in literary texts with pragmatic meaning, but also important elements in everyday discourse and in shaping the way people think. Metaphorical meanings of colour terms show people's perception of surrounding world and their cognition of reality. They often move from the scope of authors' genuine metaphors to the level of everyday vocabulary, used by common people in various life situations.

Green / Зелений colour Metonymies in English and Ukrainian fiction. Metonymy of colour terms is the fundamental part of our conceptual system. People take one well-understood or easily perceived aspect of thing (its colour) to represent or stand for the thing as a whole. A colour term or phrase denoting colour hue in literary text is a metonymy if its actual meaning appears unconventional or inappropriate in the co-text or if it does not refer in a relevant way to a referent in the world of the text or if it is only relevant as part of a larger process or issue [6, p.20]. The (ideal) reader is then able to give the reference of the metonymic colour expression a new direction within the context of the same conceptual domain on the basis of his knowledge of the world, assumptions concerning the global context and author's intentions in this very literary text. For example, *green* in the following citation is metonymy, as it is use not in direct meaning, but figuratively, denoting all plants and trees in the forest:

"Made of birchwood they were --; this wood's mostly oak and birch giving way to conifers as we come out, with a view of the foothills. "I listened carefully as I want to learn all the green I can in case Maggie comes our way (B. Howell *Dandelion days*).

Writers often use metonymy or its subtype synecdoche to refer to people, objects and events in their texts by their dominant quality. *Synecdoche* is a figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part, the special for the general or the general for the special. For example, in the sentence '*Зелені ходили вулицями і агітували городян прибирати вулиці, очищувати джерела, саджати дерева*' (О. Іваненка *Марія*) *Зелені* stands for the members of the Green Party who take care of nature protection.

Colour metonymy is used with a range of verbs normally associated with human subjects; *зелені* can *охороняти, захищати, доповідають, мітингувати*, while *Green Berets* can *fight, attack, assault, line up, be trained*:

The missions of the Green Berets, who are known officially as the United States Army Special Forces, are

sometimes confused by the public with those of the Navy SEALs. In addition to the combat tactics and reconnaissance those groups perform, Green Berets are trained in languages, culture, diplomacy, psychological warfare, disinformation and politics (M. Ripley *Angel touch*).

Institutions for people (Eng. *Greenpeace, Green Berets*; Ukr. *Партія Зелених*) is not the only colour metonymic mapping found in fiction section of corpora. In the following citation, physical aspect of parrot (its colour and shape of fair) stands metonymically for its behavioural properties:

The green leek was scuttling along from arm to arm across his shoulders and its coverts jutted out ("Take back plenty". Short stories).

The same happens in the Ukrainian language, when part of top of tree stands for the whole tree and acquires qualities of living being:

Стоять похмурі, розвісивши свої зелені шати, і гомонять... Про віщо? Хто знає. ... От зрозуміти б їхню мову (М. Олійник *Леся*)

Genuine metonymies make prose or poetic texts more emotional, creating deeper symbolic meaning, and can be understood only in context. For example, metonymic clause '*asking if I'd like to see the fair on the green*' from Catherine Cookson's 'The rag nymph' makes little sense apart from the context that characters are going to organize fair in the open air. The vaguer the colour metonymic reference is, the more challenging it is for the readers to complete the metonymic mapping and the greater is the poetic effect. This quality of metonymies makes them very productive for interpretations in literary texts. Much poetry uses metonymy in this way, the description of the single event evoking a situation that may have wider, even universal meaning. Readers' understanding of the poem thus depends much on their ability to think metonymically at the mention of parts of the event and infer something about the entire situation. For instance, in the following stanza word group *зелені ниви* stands metonymically for the traditional Ukrainian landscape in the rural area. Metonymy evokes in readers' mind the romantic picture of harmonious man-nature relations in the previous centuries, when territory was not urbanized and polluted by industrial companies. It creates positive atmosphere of the whole poem:

Ой майнули білі коні, тільки в'ються гриви, / Тільки курява лягає на зелені ниви. / Пронеслись, прогунотіли, врізалися в небо, / Впала з воза моя мрія – нішки йде до тебе (В.Симоненко *Ой майнули білі коні*).

The dynamics of the evolutionary metonymic colour term sequence that present numerous authors' colour hues is often explained by cultural and technological complexity of society. In small societies, where the local environment is well-known to everyone, secondary metonymic colour terms created by individual writers are not only sufficient but actually advantageous. As far as all people know 'plant X', then the secondary colour term 'colour of plant X' carries more information than some hypothetical abstract colour name. 'Colour of plant X' in this case metonymically presents

physical qualities of object, not only plant colour and hue, but also its lightness and texture:

*He was half-Arab, with a pale olive skin that now gleamed golden in the thin ribbons of light from the half-closed shutters (S. Beauman *Destiny*).*

Such metonymic colour terms let the author create the detailed picture of what is happening in the imaginary world of his text and at the same time express writers' vision of that world and its properties. Still in multinational communities, general abstract colour terms are required to convey information to people who may not have the same referent in their environment

Many of colour metonymies have become conventionalized, as in Ukrainian lexeme *зелені* standing for money:

*Не надірівіось, скиньмо трохи ноші. / Наступні йдуть. Вони візьмуть. За гроші. / Підуть за гроші свій народ спасать. / За зелененькі. Слинить пальці (Г. Паламарчук *Надрив звучить у наших голосах*).*

The concept of colour metonymy also informs the nature of polysemy, i.e., how the same phonological form (name of colour) has different semantic mappings (meanings). If the two meanings are unrelated, as in the word green meaning colour versus plants, they are considered homonyms. Within logical colour polysemies, a large class of mappings can be considered to be a case of metonymic transfer (e.g., green for plants, as well as their leaves; *зелені* for nature protectors, as well as for political institution). Other cases wherein the meaning is polysemous, however, may turn out to be more metaphorical, e.g., *green* as in *green around the gills* 'looking or feeling nauseated', where it denoted illness.

Metonymies based on colour terms are widely used both in English and Ukrainian fiction, as they add deeper meaning in the understanding of the literary characters and situations. Colour metonymies constitute one of the primary ways people refer to people, events and situations and thus reflect the particular mode of authors' thought.

Thorough analysis of the non-colour aspects of green colour terms meaning in English and Ukrainian fiction show individual possibilities of thought conceptualization. Colour words often display metaphorical associations to moral, emotional, supernatural and other kinds of non-physical entities and beliefs. Such associations have been widely used in the English and Ukrainian literature, extending the semantic structure of green colour. Colour metaphors are used in literary texts for conceptualizing and making expressible relevant parts of people's inner life and everyday reality. In

the literary context the change of direct colour meaning into metaphorical takes place because of certain emotions caused by a specific moment or event. Colour similes usually compare two objects that initially seem unlike but are shown by writers to have a significant resemblance. When used for characters' description, green colour similes in English and Ukrainian are based on comparison with animals, birds, insects or plants, which are green. Negative evaluation is implied in the comparison with frog or snake, while positive are carried by trees and plants. Further research of transfer of colour terms meaning can be conducted relating to colour synaesthesia in English and Ukrainian literature.

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